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ABSTRACT

This paper traces events in the life of George Peabody. Born in Danvers, Massachusetts near Boston, Peabody attended a district school for four years and was apprenticed in a general store at an early age. After four years of apprenticeship, Peabody worked with his brother in a drapery shop, then traveled to the District of Columbia with his uncle to open a store at age 16. By 19, Peabody was in partnership in the firm Riggs, Peabody and Co., a drygoods importing and wholesaling business now relocated in Baltimore (Maryland). Highlights of Peabody's life are noted: (1) he was a financier in the sale of state bonds abroad; (2) he was disappointed in romance; (3) he was snubbed by British aristocracy until the Duke of Wellington accepted his invitation; (4) he had made numerous endowments to cultural institutes, low-cost housing in England, science museums, and libraries which were named after him; (5) he had worked to restore an educational system to the South after the devastation of the Civil War; and (6) at his unusual funeral there was a public display of sorrow. (EH)

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George Peabody (1795-1869): Merchant, Banker, Philanthropist*

by

Franklin and Betty J. Parker

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Apprenticeship, 1807-11

Thomas Peabody and his wife Judith Dodge Peabody lived at 205 Washington Street, Danvers, Massachusetts, 19 miles from Boston. They had 8 children. George Peabody, third born and second son, went four years to a district school.

Thomas Peabody, the father, was not successful. He sold most of his land. His home was mortgaged. George Peabody's classmate from a better-off family went to Lancaster Academy. George was apprenticed in Sylvester Proctor's general store.

He opened the store, swept, cleaned, put out produce, carried boxes, rolled barrels, stacked shelves, waited on customers, and copied accounts. Penmanship was important.

Proctor's store was a good place to learn about people, trading, and the world. Sums, difficult in school, had to be accurate.

Geography came naturally: sugar and molasses from the West Indies, superfine woolens from England, linen from Ireland, cloves from the Spice Islands, cinnamon from Ceylon, coffee from Arabia, cotton from India.

You waited on customers, judged when to grant credit, withhold it, collect it; learned barter trade; English pounds, shillings, and pence; dollars and cents.

After four years as apprentice, George had earned his room and board plus $5 cash and a new suit of clothes. To precepts from Sylvester Proctor, Peabody later said, "I attribute much of my success." (1: p. 27) Years later (1852), he asked Sylvester Proctor to lay the cornerstone of the first Peabody Institute Library, Danvers (renamed Peabody), one of seven Peabody libraries.

Riggs, Peabody and Co., 1811-14

At age 15 Peabody visited his maternal grandparents in Thetford, Vt., returning via Barnstead, N. H., visiting his mother's sister and husband. He then went to Newburyport, 15 miles north of Danvers, to work in older brother David's drapery shop.

In May 1811, his father died and the Great Fire of Newburyport ruined business. His father's brother, Uncle John Peabody, urged George to go south with him to open a store in Georgetown, D. C. The 16-year-old got a letter of credit from a Newburyport merchant and $2,000 in merchandise from Boston merchant James Reed. Later, worth millions, Peabody, in Boston said of James Reed: "Here is my first patron...who sold me my first bill of goods." (1: p. 43)

George and his uncle sailed on the brig *Fame* from Newburyport, down the Atlantic, up the Potomac to Washington, D.C. Local newspaper advertisements, September 1812, read:

*Paper read, Uplands Book Club [Parker, P.O. Box 100], Pleasant Hill, TN 38578, 18 Sep.95, © 1995.

SO 025 402

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Just received and for sale by George Peabody, Bridge Street [Georgetown, D.C.]

20 do[zen] Gentlemen's Leather Gloves

200 pieces India Cotton

100 Ladies Indispensables

1,000 pr Ladies Morocco Shoes, Assorted Colours

2 cases Men's Fine Hats [etc.]" (1: pp. 47-52)

Of conscriptable age during the War of 1812, he drilled 12 days at Fort Warburton, Md. One of his mess mates, Francis Scott Key, composed *The Star Spangled Banner*.

In the War of 1812 Peabody met John Pendleton Kennedy, later a novelist and U.S. Secretary of the Navy. As Peabody's trustee, Kennedy planned the Peabody Institute of Baltimore (reference library and Conservatory of Music, both now part of Johns Hopkins University). Kennedy recorded his "Remembrance of [George Peabody as] a rather ambitious and showy, well dressed and trig young soldier." (1: p. 59)

Peabody also met older War of 1812 soldier Elisha Riggs, an established Georgetown merchant. Riggs proposed a partnership with 19-year-old Peabody. Riggs, Peabody and Co., drygoods importers and wholesalers, moved from Georgetown, D.C., to Baltimore, Md.; and continued as Peabody, Riggs and Co. (1829-43). Forty years after their first meeting, the older Riggs wrote to Peabody in London:

> But few men can look back for as many years as we both can and examine over all our business transactions in friendly intercourse with as much pride and satisfaction as we can. You always had the faculty of an extraordinary memory and strong mind which enabled you to carry out your plans better than almost any other man I ever knew, and to these I attribute much of your prosperity with extraordinary perseverance. (1: p. 65)

Selling American State Bonds Abroad: 1837-48

In 1814, their home mortgaged, Peabody's mother and her children had to live with nearby relatives. In 1817, George Peabody bought back the home, was the family's support, employed two of his brothers, and paid for the education of his younger siblings, and later their children.

In fall 1827, George Peabody first went abroad to sell southern cotton in Lancashire, England, and buy English goods with the profits. He made five trips abroad, 1827-37, remaining in London the rest of his life except for three visits home (1856, 1866, 1869).

In 1835 Maryland appointed three commissioners to sell its $8 million bond issue abroad to finance canals and railroads. In 1836 when a commissioner resigned, Peabody was appointed in his place.

The financial Panic of 1837 lasted until 1848. Nine states, including Maryland, defaulted on bond interest payments. Peabody in London had to sell Maryland's bonds in the face of repudiation. Chiding state leaders for repudiating their bonded indebtedness, Peabody assured European investors that Maryland would pay interest retroactively. He sold the bonds cheaply to

Baring Brothers and bought many himself at low cost. When interest payments resumed, he reaped a fortune.

Esther Elizabeth Hoppin, 1838

The prospect of a new, young Queen Victoria on the British throne brought many Americans to London for her coronation, June 28, 1838, including beautiful Esther Elizabeth Hoppin (1819-1905), age 19, from Providence, R. I.

She had earlier met Alexander Lardner in Philadelphia, 1835. They were infatuated but parted, she to finish school and go to England for the coronation.

Peabody, the proverbial bachelor, fell in love with Esther Hoppin. Friends talked about it in London, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. Business associate William Bend from New York wrote: "There is a report in circulation that you are to be married. Is the story true?....I hope it is really to take place. You will be too old if you put it off much longer." (2: pp. 33-37)

Esther Hoppin returned to Providence, again met Alexander Lardner, realized that her engagement to Peabody was a mistake, and explained it all in a letter to Peabody.

Mrs. W. Hyde, wife of Peabody's New York business associate, wrote him: "Miss Hoppin feels your kindness in wishing her to retain the muff and fur.... Custom has made it imperative that after an engagement is broken...all presents shall be returned even to the value of a pin." (1: pp. 156-157)

Another friend wrote Peabody: "I share...your feelings, at the blighting of hopes so fondly cherished, at the crushing of expectations." (1: p. 158) After Peabody died, a letter in the *Providence Journal* read: "I well remember, when in London, 28 years ago, hearing all this talked over in a chosen circle of friends; and also at a brilliant dinner-party...in [Marseilles, France], it was thoroughly discussed." (1: p. 159)

In New York, when Peabody was an old man near death, a friend congratulated him on being the greatest philanthropist of his time. Peabody said: "After my disappointment long ago, I determined to devote myself to my fellow-beings, and am carrying out that decision to my best ability." (1: pp. 160-161)

Esther Hoppin married Alexander Lardner, a cashier in the Bank of the United States in Philadelphia. They had a happy marriage and two children. Lardner died at age 40. Esther outlived Peabody by 36 years.

American artist Thomas Sully's portrait of Esther Hoppin shows her beauty, her curled auburn hair in ringlets on bare shoulders, eyes looking into the misty distance, a thin smile on full red lips. Evangeline had her lover, Dante his Beatrice, Peabody his Esther--and a dream of what might have been.

After 1843, Peabody's new firm, George Peabody and Co., sold American state securities, helped finance the Mexican War loan, shipped European iron and steel for American railroads, helped finance the Atlantic Cable Co., and was ultimately the root of the J. P. Morgan banking house. Peabody made a fortune, then gave it away.

First World's Fair, 1851

Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's husband, proposed the first World's Fair, 1851. "Hyde Park...will be turned into the bivouac of all the vagabonds of London," complained the London *Times*. Said a House of Commons opponent: "It is the...greatest fraud...palmed upon the people of this country,...to introduce amongst us foreign stuff of every description." (1: pp. 237-238)

Joseph Paxton's architectural design, the Great Crystal Palace, was a glass exhibition hall supported by barrel transepts. Tree lovers decried cutting down three giant elms. Paxton roofed them in, creating another sensation.

Other governments but not the U.S. financed their exhibitions. American products piled up on Southampton docks. The large 40,000 square-foot American pavilion was unadorned. Satirical magazine *Punch* wrote, "We could not help...being struck by the glaring contrast between large pretensions and little performance [of] America." The New York *Evening Post* correspondent in London wrote: "American wares, which are good, are so barely displayed, so...ambitiously spread out in so large a space." (1: p. 240). No one knew what to do until Peabody offered a loan of $15,000.

Many of the six million people who visited the Great Exhibition saw at the American pavilion Alfred C. Hobbs's unpickable lock, Samuel Colt's revolvers, Hiram Power's statue *The Greek Slave*, Cyrus McCormick's reaper, Richard M. Hoe's cylinder printing press, and Bond's spring governor.

About Peabody's well known hospitality, William S. Albert wrote:

> In 1838 when on a visit to London, I lodged in the same house with him for several weeks. Under the same roof were assembled mutual friends from the city of his adoption, on whom he took pleasure in bestowing those marks of attention so grateful in a foreign land, making the house a home to us all. (2: p. 105)

Before such firms as American Express, George Peabody and Co. secured for visiting Americans tickets to parliament, the theater, and opera; arranged tours, honored letters of credit, shipped goods, made loans, gave commercial advice.

Rushed with business and social calls, Peabody asked Ambassador Abbott Lawrence's advice about a Peabody-hosted July 4, 1851, British-American dinner.

It was 68 years since the American Revolution, 37 years since the War of 1812, ten years since the dispute with Britain over the Maine boundary. Britishers disdained Americans as brash and boastful.

Ambassador Lawrence cautioned Peabody:

> Lady Palmerston [the British Prime Minister's wife] was here. She has seen the leading ladies of the town and quoted one as saying the fashionables are tired of balls. I am

quite satified that the fashionables and aristocracy of London do not wish to attend. (1: p. 247)

Prospects looked dim until Peabody invited the Duke of Wellington, victor over Napoleon at Waterloo and England's saviour. The crusty 84-year-old Duke said yes. British aristocracy followed. A thousand guests attended Peabody's July 4, 1851, dinner. A professional master of ceremonies toasted Her Majesty the Queen, the President of the United States, and Anglo-American friendship.

Attending this social highlight, besides the Duke, were Members of Parliament, Governor Neill S. Brown of Tennessee, the U.S. Minister to Russia, the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, a governor of the Bank of England, and various nobility.

U.S. Ambassador Lawrence praised Peabody: "Your idea of bringing together...two of the greatest nations upon earth...was a most felicitous conception.... I congratulate you." (1: p. 250)

Peabody topped his July 4, 1851, dinner with one for departing American exhibitors. Speeches given by British and American notables were published in a book, vellum copies of which were gratefully acknowledged by President Millard Filimore, Prince Albert, the Duke of Wellington, and others.

Business associate William W. Corcoran, with whom Peabody had marketed the Mexican War Loan and who had donated the Corcoran Art Gallery to Washington, D.C., wrote Peabody: "You will make us proud to call you friend and countryman." Peabody replied: "However liberal I may be here, I cannot keep pace with your noble acts of charity at <u>home</u>; but one of these days...I shall become a strong competitor of yours in benevolence." (1: p. 266)

<u>First Peabody Institute Library, 1852</u>

Peabody's birthplace, Danvers, Mass., celebrated its hundredth year of separation from Salem, June 15, 1852. Peabody explained to the Centennial Committee:

> My engagements do not permit me to attend.... It was in a humble house in the South Parish that I was born and in the common schools...obtained the limited education my parents could afford. To the principles learned there I owe...any success Heaven has been pleased to grant me.... [To repay my debt] I enclose a sentiment to be opened after the reading of this letter. (1: p. 270)

That sentiment read: "Education, a Debt Due From Present to Future Generations." With it was a check for the first Peabody Institute Library, Danvers (renamed Peabody), to which he gave a total of $217,600 for a building, lyceum hall and fund, and library. When Danvers was divided north and south, Peabody gave North Danvers a total of $100,000 for a similar institute. He later founded Peabody libraries in Georgetown, Mass. (where his mother was born); Newburyport, Mass., where he worked in brother David's drapery shop; Thetford, Vt., where he visited his maternal grandparents; Georgetown, D.C., and Baltimore, seven libraries, one in every city where he lived and worked.

Peabody Institute libraries were then adult education lecture centers, now tax-supported public libraries. Ralph Waldo Emerson, Daniel Webster, young Abe Lincoln, and hundreds of poopular ministers, politicians, scientists lectured and spread learning in such institutes.

Peabody Institute of Baltimore, 1866

To Marylanders visiting London (1851, 1854, and 1856), Peabody proposed a large cultural institute, but nothing happened. He wrote John Pendleton Kennedy: "I suppose you Baltimore people do not care to have an institution established among you, as I have heard nothing of the suggestion [I] made...some years ago." (2: p. 106)

Kennedy planned the Peabody Institute of Baltimore, modeled on the British Museum: a special reference library, lecture hall and fund, Peabody academy of music, art gallery, and prizes for Baltimore school students.

Peabody ultimately gave $1.4 million to the Peabody Institute of Baltimore. Bitterness arose over the site, over the Maryland Historical Society's role in the new institute, and over the Civil War.

Dedicating the Peabody Institute of Baltimore, October 25, 1866, Peabody reconciled former Civil War enemies. He pleaded: "May not this Institute be a common ground where all may meet burying former differences and animosities? May not Baltimore, the birthplace of religious toleration, become the star of political tolerance and charity?" (2: p. 46)

A photograph taken from the roof of a nearby building shows Peabody, age 71, on the steps of the Peabody Institute of Baltimore, greeting schoolchildren. Trustee Josias Pennington told how Peabody picked up children, kissed them, and put them down with the tenderness of a father. "The scene brought tears into many eyes, and many a handkerchief that waved was moist." (2: p. 47)

Peabody admitted errors made over the legal rights of the Maryland Historical Society, originally asked to administer the Institute. He gave $20,000 to the Society's publication fund. He asked humbly that they withdraw from the original agreement. The trustees acquiesced. Harmony prevailed.

During that 1866-67 U.S. visit, John W. Garrett, Baltimore and Ohio Railroad president, brought together Peabody and Baltimore merchant Johns Hopkins. Hopkins, a wealthy unmarried Quaker, sought a benefaction to endow. Peabody told Hopkins:

> When age came upon me, and...aches and pains made me realize that I was not immortal, I felt, after taking care of my relatives, great anxiety to place the millions I had accumulated so as to accomplish the greatest good for humanity. (3: p. 166)

Peabody told how he had asked friends to be his trustees and gave them increasing funds which they used "for good and humane purposes.... And so, I have gone on and from that day realized with increasing enjoyment the pleasure of giving." (2: p. 109)

Twenty-four hours later, Johns Hopkins' will recorded his $8 million endowment for the Johns Hopkins University, Hospital, and Medical School.

Peabody Homes of London, 1862

Peabody wanted to do something grand for London. His intermediary consulted social reformer Lord Shaftesbury, who said that the working poor's greatest need was low-cost housing.

Peabody's housing gift in 1862 came amid Anglo-American Civil War tension. Upper class Britons favored the South. The British-built Confederate ship *Alabama* had destroyed 80 Union merchantmen and a Union warship.

It amazed Britons that an American gave to a city and country not his own $2.5 million for housing the working poor. Peabody is better known in London today, where 26,000 people still live in Peabody Homes, than he is in the United States.

Peabody Museums of Science, 1866

On his 1866-67 U.S. visit, Peabody consulted with Robert Charles Winthrop (1809-90). Winthrop was trained in Daniel Webster's law office, was distinguished Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, was later Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, and was Webster's successor in the U.S. Senate.

Amazed at the scope of Peabody's philanthropy, Winthrop helped plan three Peabody museums: anthropology at Harvard, natural history at Yale ($150,000 each); and the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem ($140,000), for maritime history and Essex County historical papers.

Peabody Education Fund, 1867

Peabody was shocked by Civil War devastation he saw in the South in 1866. Former Governor of South Carolina William Aiken wrote that the South was ruined, nothing could save it, "Its destruction is now certain." (1: p. 706)

Taking out his February 7, 1867, letter founding the $2 million Peabody Education Fund, Peabody told Winthrop: And now I come to the last, for which I will do the most, now and hereafter. Winthrop, who chaired the fund, helped select its distinguished trustees, who met in Washington, D.C.'s Willard Hotel the next day.

Years later, President Bruce R. Payne of George Peabody College for Teachers described that first meeting:

> There stand several governors of states both North and South; senators of the United States, Ulysses Grant...and Admiral Farragut.... Mr. Winthrop...is called to take the chair.... Mr. Peabody rises...to read his deed of gift.... They kneel...in a circle of prayer, the Puritan of New England, the pioneer of the West, the financier of the metropolis, and the defeated veteran of the Confederacy. With bended knee...they dedicate this great gift.... They consecrate themselves to...its wise expenditure. In that act,...not quite two years after Appomattox, is the first guarantee of a reunited country. (2: p.151)

For 47 years (1867-1914) the Peabody Education Fund promoted public schools, teachers' institutes, and teacher training normal schools in 11 former Confederate states, with West Virginia added because of its poverty. The trustees included at different times three U.S. presidents (U.S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, and Grover Cleveland), two U.S. Supreme Court

justices, several state court justices, two bishops, several U.S. Congress members, U.S. cabinet members, two state governors, and financiers J. P. Morgan, Anthony Drexel (inspired as PEF trustee to found Drexel University), and Paul Tulane (inspired to found Tulane University).

The PEF trustees made Peabody Normal College (outgrowth of the University of Nashville) into the South's leading teachers college, 1875-1909; renamed George Peabody College for Teachers, 1909-79, sited next to Vanderbilt University, and renamed George Peabody College of Vanderbilt University, 1979.

In 1914, the PEF's $2.3 million principal was divided; $1.5 million went to George Peabody College for Teachers; $474,000 to 14 southern state university departments of education (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill education building is still called Peabody Hall); and $346,797 to the John F. Slatér Fund (whose money is still used for African American education).

On his last U.S. visit, Peabody went to White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, August 1869. Present there by chance were southern and northern leaders, including Robert E. Lee. Peabody and Lee appeared in a remarkable photograph, Peabody seated between business associate William W. Corcoran and Lee. Standing behind were seven former Confederate generals, including P. G. T. Beauregard of Louisiana.

Southern elites praised Peabody's $2 million PEF. Merrymakers held a Great Peabody Ball in his honor. Historian Perceval Reniers wrote, "The affair that did most to revive [the Southerners'] esteem was the Peabody ball." Historian E. Merton Coulter wrote: "The greatest gesture of friendship the South ever made toward the North...was the Peabody ball in 1869." (2: p. 73)

That meeting inspired Four Conferences on Education in the South (1898-1901), attended by PEF trustees. Those trustees also served on the Southern Education Board (1901-14), John D. Rockefeller's General Education Board (1902-14), the Samuel F. Slater Fund for Negro Education in the South (Slater acknowledged his debt to Peabody's example), the Rosenwald Fund, and the Anna T. Jeanes Fund.

Self-interest led these powerful philanthropists to see that a better educated South was needed to advance the national economy. The PEF created educational leaders, was the first U.S. multimillion dollar foundation to try to solve social problems, the first without religious conditions, the first whose influence was national, the first to provide for modification as conditions changed, the first to select trustees from the professions and business. Historians agree that George Peabody founded modern American educational philanthropy.

A Most Unusual Funeral

An ill Peabody sadly left Lee. In Baltimore he saw a photograph of his statue just unveiled in Threadneedle Street near the London Exchange. In Salem, Mass., he ordered a granite tomb. In New York he completed his last will. He arrived in London gravely ill. He died November 4, 1869, at the home of business associate Sir Curtis Lampson.

Not knowing that Peabody's will required burial in America, Dean Arthur P. Stanley of Westminster Abbey later wrote in his *Recollections*:

> I was in Naples, and saw in the...papers that George Peabody had died.... Considering...by reason of his benefactions to...London [that he was] entitled to burial in Westminster Abbey, I telegraphed...that his interment there should take place. (2: p. 115)

Lampson telegraphed nephew George Peabody Russell in Massachusetts, who left for England to take the body home. There would be at least two weeks' delay. Letters in the London press asked for public honors to Peabody. Royal advisor Arthur Helps told the Queen, who had invited Peabody to recuperate at Windsor Castle, "There are many persons...who...wish to pay public...respect to the memory of that good man." (2: p. 116)

The *Alabama* claims were then being negotiated. The U. S. demanded $15.5 million in reparations. Britons were incensed. Tension rose. In his *Autobiography*, Andrew Carnegie recalled that he cabled British cabinet member John Bright: "First and best service possible for *Monarch*, bringing home the body of Peabody." (1: pp. 891-892)

On November 10, Prime Minister W. E. Gladstone's cabinet approved transfer of Peabody's remains to America aboard H.M.S. *Monarch*, Britain's newest, largest warship. Gladstone said publicly, "With the country of Mr. Peabody we are not likely to quarrel." (2: p. 117)

The hearse left Lampson's home, noon, November 12, for Westminster Abbey. U.S. Ambassador John Lothrop Motley wrote to Secretary of State Hamilton Fish, "The silence and decorum in the midst of the chief thoroughfares of this immense city were impressive." (2: p. 117)

The coffin was placed near the tomb of Britain's unknown soldier in the Abbey. American Embassy secretary Benjamin Moran wrote in his journal:

> I reflected on the marvelous career of the man, his early life, his penurious habits, his vast fortune, his magnificent charity; and the honor...then being paid to his memory by the Queen of England in the place of sepulchre of twenty English kings.... An anthem was sung and the service...end[ed]--George Peabody having received burial in Westminster Abbey, an honor coveted by nobles and not always granted kings. (2: p. 118)

The Bishop of London said, "No untitled commoner ever drew round his grave so large a concourse of sincere mourners as George Peabody. His name will be the birthright of two great nations." (2: p. 119)

The coffin lay in the Abbey 30 days. President Grant ordered the U.S.S. *Plymouth* from Marseilles, France, to accompany the *Monarch* across the Atlantic.

Secretary Benjamin Moran's journal reflected embassy consternation: "Peabody haunts the Legation from all parts of the world like a ghost.... Old Peabody has given us much trouble.... Will that old man ever be buried?" (2: p. 120)

The coffin was drawn from Westminster Abbey to Waterloo Station, placed on a special train to Portsmouth dock. In pouring rain, marines formed an honor guard. Scarlet-robed town

council members under black umbrellas mingled oddly with lines, spars, and beams of assembled ships. A gun salute came from H.M.S. *Excellent*.. The *Monarch* 's bow battery echoed the boom. Bugles sounded a funeral dirge. The American flag was raised. Guns were fired at minute intervals.

Into your hands, said American Ambassador Motley, "I deliver...Mr. Peabody['s] remains." The *Monarch*'s Captain John Commerell accepted "this sacred trust." (2: p. 120)

While church bells tolled, the *Monarch*, at Spithead Harbor, awaited the gale's end and the long voyage home.

British honors brought dispute in America. A Union extremist said, "Peabody's remains...on a British ship of war [is an] insult.... Peabody was a secessionist." The charge, often made, was as often denied.

"My sympathies were with the Union," Peabody told a Baltimore audience in 1866. "Three-fourths of my property was invested in United States Government and State securities.... I saw no hope...except in Union Victory. But I could not turn my back on Southern friends." (2: p. 121)

The U.S. Congress argued over a naval reception for Peabody's remains. Grudgingly, both Houses approved. President Grant ordered Admiral Farragut to meet the *Monarch* in American waters.

H.M.S. *Monarch*, accompanied by the U.S.S. *Plymouth*, went south to Madeira, west to Bermuda, north toward New England.

Boston was chagrined that little Portland was chosen because of its deeper harbor. Controversy stirred the Maine legislature, where Unionists attacked Peabody for his philanthropic generosity to the "rebels."

The *Monarch*'s Captain Commerell told Admiral Farragut that Her Majesty's Government required the remains on board two more days as a last mark of respect. Silent Portlanders moved past the coffin (January 27-28) in the *Monarch* 's mortuary chapel.

Monarch seamen carried the coffin ashore, January 29, a cold New England winter's day. Drummers sounded a muted roll. The band played the somber *Death March*. Visitors filed by the coffin lying in state in Portland's city hall.

On February 1, 300 voices sang *The Messiah*. Mozart's *Requiem* sounded. Plumed horses pulled the hearse through Portland streets. The funeral train entered Peabody, Mass. (South Danvers was renamed Peabody in 1868).

Some feared that if Robert E. Lee attended there would be demonstrations. Lee was too ill to attend. Prince Arthur, Queen Victoria's son, was a surprise guest, along with Massachusetts and Maine governors, Harvard President Charles W. Eliot, mayors of six nearby cities, and trustees of Peabody's institutes.

Honors received in life were displayed in the Peabody Institute: Queen Victoria's specially made miniature portrait, the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal and resolution of praise for the PEF,

the Freedom of the City of London, honorary memberships in the Fishmongers and Clothworkers' Companies.

Robert Charles Winthrop said in his eulogy:

> What a career this has been whose final scene lies before us! The trusts he established, the institutes he founded, the buildings he raised stand before all eyes.....He planned these for many years.... When I expressed...amazement at...his purpose, he said to me, "Why Mr. Winthrop, this is no new idea for me. From the earliest of my manhood, I have contemplated some such disposition of my property; and I have prayed my heavenly Father day by day, that I might be enabled, before I died, to show my gratitude for the blessings which He has bestowed upon me by doing some great good for my fellow-men." (2: p. 126)

Those words are carved on his Westminster Abbey marker. He was buried in Harmony Grove Cemetery where he played as a boy, where he built the family tomb for father, mother, brothers, sisters. The unusual 96-day funeral ended.

What George Peabody Meant to Us

Betty Parker and I met, 1946, Berea College, Ky., taught at Ferrum College, near Roanoke, Va., 1950-52; attended George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, summer 1951, and continuously 1952-56.

Harvard historian Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., first urged future Peabody College President Felix Robb to write his Harvard doctoral dissertation on Peabody's educational philanthropy. Preferring to write on education administration, perhaps regretting not having done the Peabody study, Robb urged Frank to do it.

Reading Peabody papers in Washington, Baltimore, New York, New England, and London, we marveled at his remarkable career. One reason for his philanthropy may have been his broken engagement to Esther Hoppin. Another reason may have been regret at his own lack of education. To a nephew who asked financial help to attend Yale College (1831), Peabody wrote:

> Deprived as I was of the opportunity of obtaining anything more than the most common education, I am well qualified to estimate its value by the disadvantages I labor under in the society which my business and situation in life frequently throws me,...willingly would I now give twenty times the expense attending a good education could I now possess it, but it is now too late for me. (2: p. 102)

In 1856, Peabody offered a clue to his patriotism and hospitality:

> Heaven has been pleased to reward my efforts with success, and has permitted me to establish...a house in the great metropolis of England.... I have endeavored...to make it an American house,...to give it an American atmosphere; to furnish it with American journals; to make it a center for American news, and an agreeable place for my...friends visiting London. (2: p. 21)

Peabody is now largely forgotten. Why? On retirement, he withdrew his name from his firm. George Peabody and Co. continued under his Massachusetts-born partner's name, J. S. Morgan and Co. Morgan's son, John Pierpont Morgan, who began as New York agent of George Peabody & Co., became the world famous international banker, U.S. Steel Corporation founder, and financier of America's industrial might. Yet the forgotten George Peabody was the root of the House of Morgan.

Rockefeller, Carnegie, Ford, dozens of other philanthropists were richer, more famous, with foundations worth hundreds of millions of dollars. Yet Peabody's philanthropy influenced them all.

The Peabody dissertation was finished in 1956. Teaching jobs followed. Vanderbilt University Press published *George Peabody, A Biography*, 1971, revised 1995 for his 200th birthday.

The George Peabody story was our grand adventure.

Main Sources

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[2]_____, "Legacy of George Peabody: Special Bicentenary Issue" *Peabody Journal of Education*, LXX, No. 1 (Fall 1994), 210 pages [reprints of 22 articles].

[3]_____, *George Peabody, A Biography*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1995 revision, 278 pp. [Contains 12 contemporary George Peabody illustrations].